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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
1 November 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
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HIGHLIGHTS

A brigade of the US 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) has inflicted heavy casualties on the Viet Cong in a series of sharp engagements near the Plei Me Special Forces camp. In North Vietnam four DRV fighters attempted unsuccessfully to attack two US RB-66 Destroyers 85 miles northwest of Hanoi. North Vietnamese antiaircraft artillery gunners apparently downed one of their own MIG fighters during the successful US attack on the Kep highway bridge.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
US Marines and a US Navy construction battalion beat off what may have been another Viet Cong attempt to strike the Da Nang East Airfield (Para. 1). A brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) operating near the Plei Me Special Forces camp inflicted heavy casualties on the Viet Cong in a series of sharp engagements on 31 October and 1 November (Paras. 2-3). US Navy and Coast Guard patrol boats come to the assistance of an ARVN outpost under attack on Phu Quoc Island (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Saigon was preoccupied today with a major celebration of its National Day, marking the second anniversary of the overthrow of the Diem regime (Para. 1). A suicide by burning, the only disruptive incident so far noted in Saigon, occurred today within the Buddhist Institute grounds, but does not appear to have had Buddhist sanction or foreknowledge (Para. 2).

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III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

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An unusual coastal defense position
was revealed (Para. 6).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: Nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Radio Hanoi on 1 November publicized a Fatherland Front rally in the Vinh Linh special zone (near the DMZ) calling for the trial of captured American pilots before the DRV's Supreme Peoples' Court (Para. 1).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US Marines discovered at least two Viet Cong boats approaching the Da Nang East Airfield, part of the Da Nang Air Base complex, at 7:20 a.m. EST on 1 November. The marines opened fire as did a nearby Mobile Construction Battalion (MCB). The Viet Cong returned the fire with mortars from their boats, but did not inflict any casualties on friendly forces. No aircraft were reported damaged. Vietnamese naval units were reported to be on-station and attempting to intercept the fleeing Viet Cong. The marine and MCB cantonment area is located at the southern end of the peninsula on which Da Nang East is situated.

2. A brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Air-mobile), now operating in the area of the Plei Me Special Forces camp has made several contacts with the Viet Cong and scored significant results during the period 31 October and 1 November. Latest reports from MACV indicate that the Viet Cong have lost 99 killed and 44 captured, with additional 16 suspects being held. Friendly losses, according to the early reports, stand at 4 killed and 37 wounded. It is unknown at this time whether the dead are US or Vietnamese.

3. The Viet Cong were engaged in three separate actions occurring northwest, west, and southwest of Plei Me. In one of the actions, about five miles southwest of the Special Forces camp, a Viet Cong hospital area was overrun by 1st Cavalry troopers, who reported 50 Viet Cong killed and 21 others captured. There was no indication of the identity of the Viet Cong forces engaged, but a newly infiltrated PAVN regiment is believed to be operating in the vicinity of the fighting.

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4. According to press reports, two US Coast Guard cutters and two newly arrived Swift motor patrol boats came to the assistance of an ARVN post under attack on 31 October. The incident occurred while the Viet Cong were attacking a post situated on the northwestern tip of Phu Tuoc Island, in the Gulf of Thailand. The boats fired mortars and automatic weapons into the attacking Viet Cong force.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Saigon today celebrated the second anniversary of South Vietnam's new National Day--marking the overthrow of the Diem regime--with a major parade of military troops, including contingents from US and third-country forces, and a display of weaponry and air power. The inclusion of two marching companies of Montagnards in colorful ethnic garb, reportedly the highlight for the festive Vietnamese viewers, apparently reflected a further gesture by Vietnam's military ruler to strengthen the feeling of loyalty among the tribesmen.

2. Only one incident was reported to have marred the holiday in Saigon, the self-immolation of an unidentified Vietnamese man on the Buddhist Institute grounds. Although the man was wearing saffron robes, Buddhist leaders reportedly have denied any knowledge of his motive. The incident does not bear the earmarks of an officially sponsored Buddhist protest, and there has been no indication of any Buddhist intention to challenge the government at this time.

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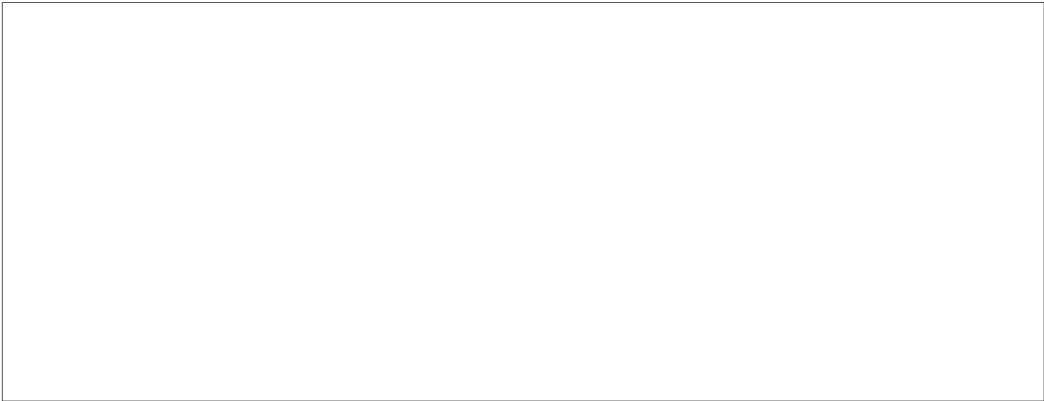
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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM



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6. An unusual coastal defense position was seen [redacted] The installation, at the mouth of the river northeast of Vinh, contains four 45-foot drive-through revetments and a number of associated buildings. Further analysis [redacted] [redacted] is presently under way in Washington.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Radio Hanoi on 1 November publicized a Fatherland Front rally calling for the trial of captured American pilots before the DRV's Supreme Peoples' Court. The announcement portrays the meeting as a public clamor for the prosecution of the captured pilots as war criminals and raises the specter of public trials without officially associating the regime with the action. The Fatherland Front rally, held in the Vinh Linh special zone (near the DMZ), was repeated in other parts of the Vinh Linh area, according to the announcement. Vietnamese parents who had lost children in the air raids reportedly "took the floor to denounce the US aggressors."

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